

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families: Strategic Planning

July 16th, 2014

Introductions

Today's Agenda

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Draft Client Continuum Framework

Results from TANF focus groups and TANF cash participant survey

Discussion: DPHHS policies that affect clients

Discussion: Measures of Success

Participatory session: What's on the table?

Review of Charge to the Committee

Developing an overarching purpose statement for use of TANF funds that expresses the core value and purpose for the use of TANF block grant funds.

Proposing a framework that will ensure that projects funded with TANF block grant funds are complementary, integrated, interdependent, and designed to strategically achieve the overarching purpose for the funds.

Prioritizing this integrated framework by emphasizing evidence-based practices

Recommending strategies to collect outcome data for future evidence-based decision-making.

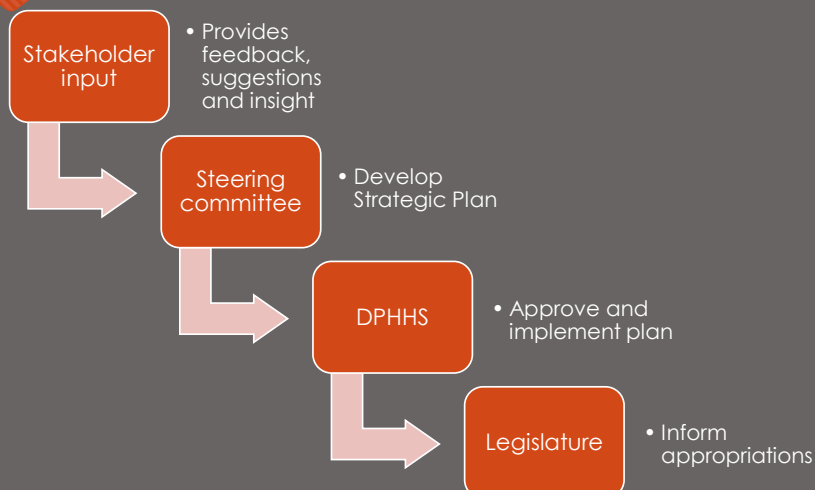
Review of Charge to the Committee

Designing a long-range strategy on the management of "carryover" funds to ensure the proper balance between meeting immediate needs while preserving "rainy day" funds for periods of economic downturn.

Providing a public input opportunity to the Department in the prioritization of use of TANF block grant funds

Learning from and informing constituent groups, stakeholders, and the legislature of how this integrated and prioritized strategic plan for use of TANF block grant funds will improve efficiencies and effectiveness in the use of those funds, with focus on support and self-sufficiency for needy families.

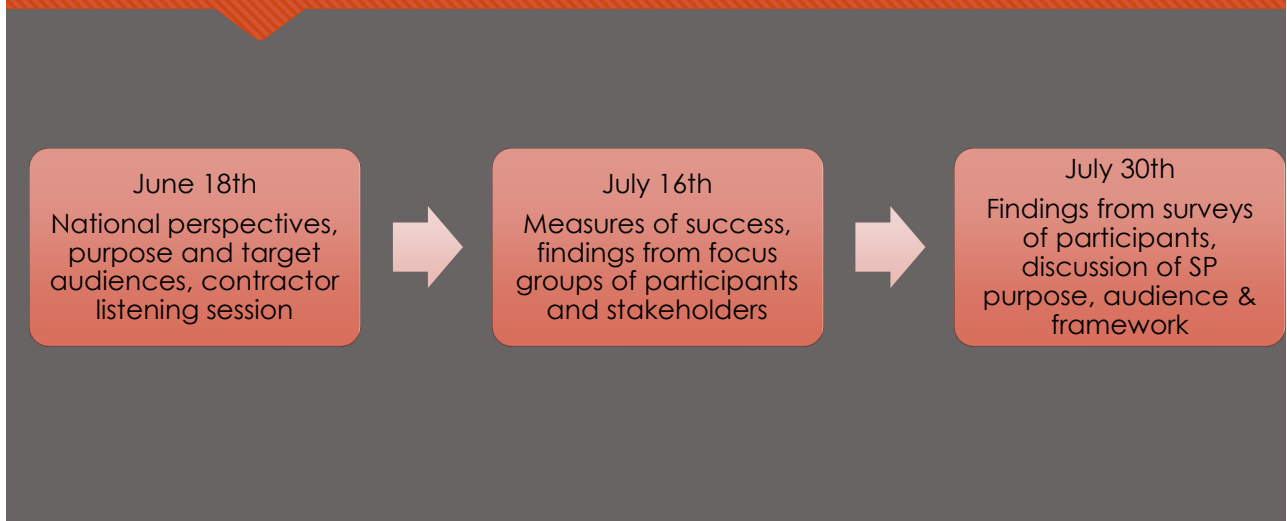
Roles and Responsibilities



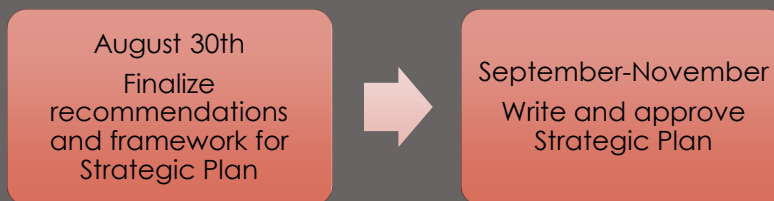
Data collection plan for Strategic Plan

Current TANF data report	One page summaries and listening session with contractors	Focus groups with contractors and interested parties	Focus groups with TANF cash participants	Survey of TANF cash and non-cash participants
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compiled by MT TANF program • Emailed to committee on 6/13 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summaries solicited from contractors in May • Compiled & emailed to committee on 6/13 • Listening session on afternoon of 6/18 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 sessions conducted by Bloom Consulting • Billings, Butte, Glasgow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 sessions conducted by Bloom Consulting • Butte, Glasgow, Hardin and Lame Deer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online and paper survey made available through WoRC and other contractors to participants

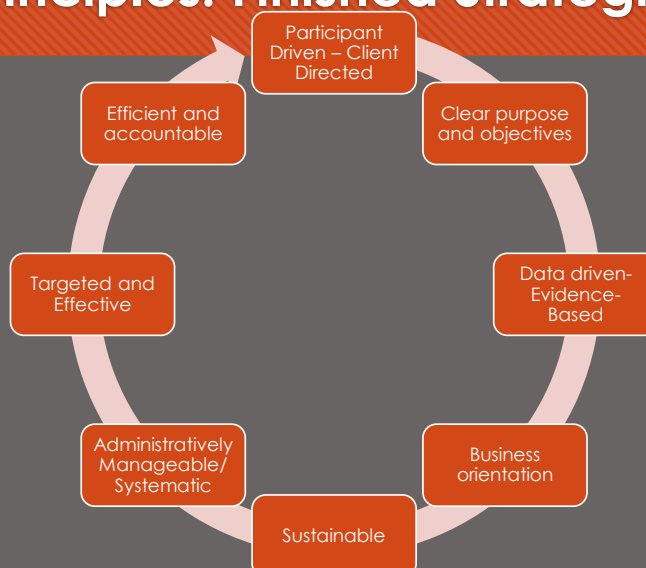
Meeting Topics and Timeline



Meeting Topics and Timeline



Guiding Principles: Finished Strategic Plan



Questions?

TANF program policies that need to change (notes taken during meeting)

- Low benefit amount-not enough to cover rent much less anything else
- Needs to be both (raise benefits and incentivize activities)
- Some objections to PFP-if we are serving all clients where they are at-they will all be working and putting in time-might drive people to do the "paid activities" not what they need
- The wait time is unacceptable-sometimes is 6 weeks to even hear if they are accepted-still have to do activities and work-huge discrepancy in time. Sometimes even denied benefits after working 5-6 weeks. Also wait between application date and interview at the OPA
- Getting multiple requests for verification-expedite
- Big difference between counties
- Lack of staffing and computer-over abundance of applications, high turn over rate, conflicting policies

TANF program policies that need to change

- Client is in need of \$ and doesn't have any, expectation is that they are doing activities, have the flexibility to grant good cause. Program doesn't make sense. Folks are expected to comply from the beginning-know that they cannot meet the expectations of the program. Complicated for the clients-we are trying to follow the rules and yet help people at the same time.
- People getting sanctioned before they even start-as soon as they are authorized
- Think sanction policy is pretty liberal
- If its an agency error, is there something we could do to make people safe from the sanction.
- Need some way to at least give people a way to get transportation
- Issuing benefits right away and then giving people time to get into compliance
- Need to help participants have something positive in their lives (eg not being sanctioned-get more benefit)
- Think six month sanctions is too long, one month was too short, maybe consider 3 months

TANF program policies that need to change

- Currently-if you are losing TANF-SNAP benefits going down (federal requirement)
- Sanction-6 months is too long-six months that a mom and three kids have no financial support- were sanctioning a mom and her children (penalizing children)
- Participation rates=all or nothing deal-if a client completes ALMOST all of their hours, but from the federal perspective-counts as 0 hours
- Might need to apply meaningful case management
- Supporting incentives-used to offer incentives for completing classes, for obtaining credentials, use incentives in youth programs
- Trying to help people with co-enrollment-WoRC program is very out of sync with other employment and training programs (coordinating)
- Education limits (in conflict with work requirements)
- Flexibility regarding paid work experience-trying to find out what is countable income against their benefit

TANF program policies that need to change

- Requiring FES clients to give up their TANF
- FES-different eligibilities for different activities-would make sense to streamline that into one eligibility
- Lots of clients doing intensive outpatient treatment-anything they do is not really countable because they have so many requirements with treatment or drug court
- What is the highest priority? Family? Treatment? Housing? Work?
- Verification process-unruly, very embarrassing, have to bring verification for applying to work, having to call employers, stigmatizes worker-have to verify for the wage stub-takes away from the time spent on case management (time spent on paper work reduces amount of time being able to address barriers)-causes employed people to be sanctioned bc they have to provide pay stubs

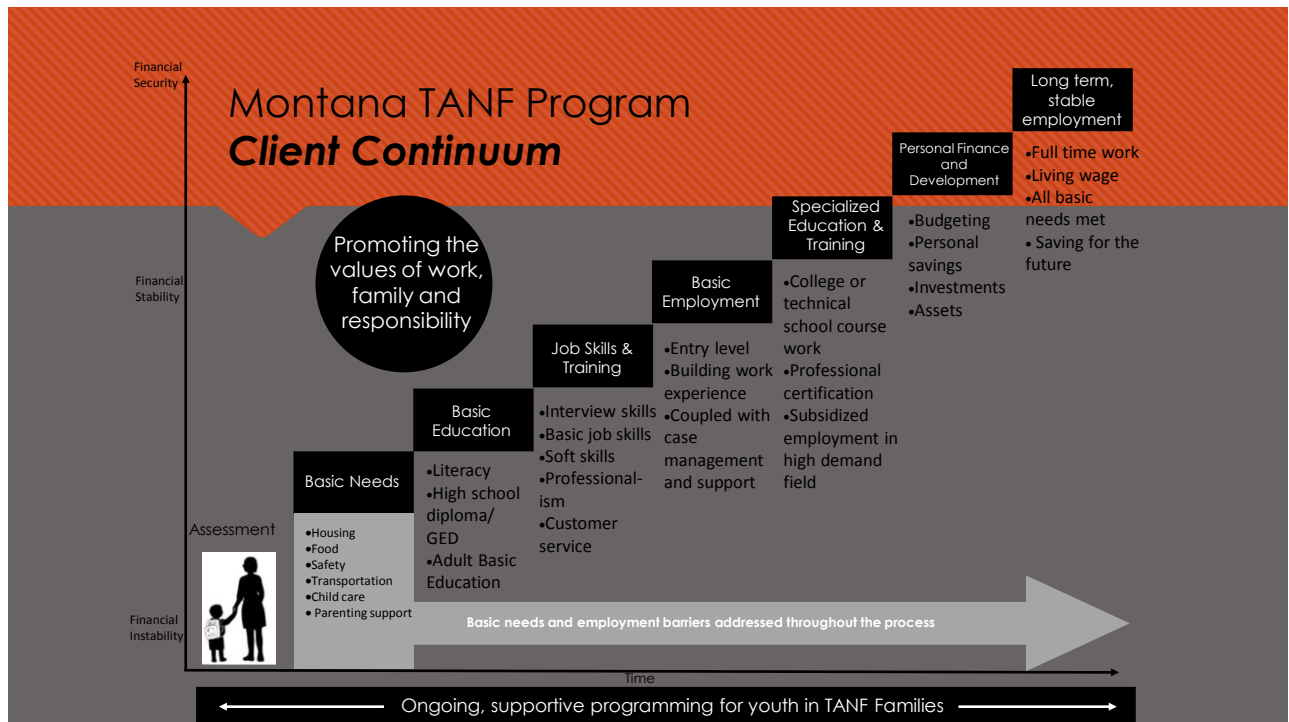
TANF program policies that need to change

- Job search-has to have four consecutive weeks and then they have to have a break-what do they do with that one week? Trouble with volunteer insurance. Wex sites don't want people for a week.
- What is the state layering on top of federal requirements for work verification?
- What are the department rules?

DRAFT Client Continuum TANF in Montana

Feedback

- Get away from the “one size fits all” model
- Focus on addressing barriers to employment
- Better coordinated services
- More client centered
- Consider local/regional concerns and customization
- Simplification
- Make sure we are doing the “core things” well
- Focus on consistent data collection and evaluation of programs- are we really helping clients?
- Address clients along a continuum of need-moving them toward independence and financial security



Feedback?

- More data from participants
- Prioritizing policy changes (chart)
- Assessment
- Extending the process-different timeline and expectation
- More focus groups and surveys (why are you on TANF and housing), focus group in an urban area
- Tribal TANF
- Framework for TANF Youth/Strengthening Families
- New ideas/bringing back old ideas
- Structural programs/carry over/reserves
- What do people really need? What else do we need to be talking about?
- See department move ahead with policy implementation that you can do.
- Sanction questions, separate name from survey
- Getting information in advance of the meeting

Timeline

